

B-3963

St. Frances Academy - Brentwood Avenue  
Historic District  
Approximately 6 blocks between Greenmount  
Avenue, Jones Falls valley, East Chase  
Street, and Amtrak line  
Baltimore, Maryland

1870-1914

The St. Frances Academy, the Industrial Building, and the Detrick and Harvey Machine Works are the three key buildings in this district which developed during the period 1870 and 1914, contemporary with the nearby Johnston Square Historic District (B-3957). Linking the three key structures are unbroken rows of late 19th century middle class houses featuring excellent brickmasonry and decorative details based on the Renaissance Revival, the Queen Anne, and other eclectic styles. The Industrial building is an individually listed National Register site and St. Frances Academy, the home of the first order of black nuns and the earliest school for black children in Maryland, is a Baltimore City Landmark. The close association of industrial, residential and religious buildings resembles Canton and Poppleton.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common St. Frances Academy - Brentwood Avenue Historic District

## 2. Location

street & number Approximately 6 blocks centered along Brentwood Avenue,  
Preston, Biddle, and Chase Streets ☐ not for publication

city, town Baltimore ☐ vicinity of congressional district 7th

state Maryland ☐ county

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Multiple public and private owners

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber

street & number Fayette and Calvert Streets folio

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. B-3963

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved      date of move _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

### SUMMARY:

The St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Avenue Historic District is an area of late 19th century rowhouses linking three key structures, St. Frances Academy, an 1870 Catholic school and convent, the Industrial Building, a 1912-1914 multi-story factory/shop building, and the Detrick and Harvey Machine Works, an 1885-1910 industrial complex, and located over approximately six square blocks between Greenmount Avenue, East Chase Street, the Jones Falls Valley, and the Amtrak approach to the Union Tunnel in east central Baltimore, Maryland. The District contains approximately 186 buildings and sites, of which 182, or about 98 percent, contribute to its historical significance. The area has been a mixture of residential, institutional, and industrial use since its origins in the 1870's. Commercial establishments were built along the York Turnpike (later Greenmount Avenue) beginning in the early 19th century. Beginning in the mid 1880's, the northern section of the District became increasingly industrial in use with the establishment of the Detrick and Harvey Machine Works on the north side of Preston Street. This complex was expanded over time and, in the 1880's, the Central Railway Power House and Depot was built on the south side of Preston. This became the site of the Industrial Building in 1912. The Industrial Building was listed in the National Register in 1980. The only other period of change began in the 1950's and was characterized by a decline in economic value, deterioration, and the demolition of some rowhouses. In the early 1980's, the Industrial Building was rehabilitated as a Section 8 elderly housing project. The St. Frances Academy remains an active Catholic educational institution and was made a Baltimore City Landmark in 1982. The building types in the District are two and three story brick rowhouses, some with excellent brickmasonry and woodwork, combined commercial/residential rowhouses, primarily on Greenmount Avenue, the St. Frances Academy complex consisting of a mansard roofed 1870 Second Empire school building and adjoining convent and a Renaissance Revival chapel built in 1907, the seven-story steel frame Industrial Building, and the reinforced brick industrial structures of the Detrick and Harvey Machine Works complex, now an auto repair shop and cab dispatch headquarters. The period of significance is 1870 to 1914, beginning with the completion date of the St. Frances Academy and ending with the date of the addition to the Industrial Building. The architectural styles represented are primarily the eclectic Victorian styles, including the Renaissance Revival, Second Empire, and the Queen Anne styles and the early 20th century Commercial style. The virtually universal building material is brick, with stone and wood dentils. The Industrial Building's concrete walls are painted a cream color. The street plan is a skewed grid with most streets running north-south and east-west, although Greenmount Avenue is diagonal to this plan. The District's integrity is generally high, although most facades have been altered. Rehabilitation of buildings in the District has been largely confined to the three key structures and isolated groups or single rowhouses.

(continue)

## 8. Significance

Survey No. B-3963

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1870-1914

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☒ national ☒ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

### SIGNIFICANCE:

The St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Avenue Historic District is nationally significant as the location of the St. Frances Academy, the convent and school built by the Oblate Sisters of Providence in 1870. The Oblate Sisters of Providence was the first Catholic order of black nuns, founded in 1828, the same year the school was founded as the first school for black children in Maryland. The convent and school have occupied the East Chase Street location in the District continuously since 1870. The District also has local significance in architecture for the excellent brickmasonry and decorative details displayed in its mostly intact rows of houses dating from the 1870's to the early 20th century. The designs are an eclectic mixture of the Renaissance Revival, the Queen Anne style, and the Arts and Crafts movement. The District has local significance in industry because of the Industrial Building, an individually listed National Register structure, which is an early 20th century industrial loft building erected by a group of leading businessmen to encourage industrial development in Baltimore. The industrial significance is reinforced by the Detrick and Harvey Machine Works, one of the leading heavy equipment manufacturers from the mid 1880's through the mid 1920's.

### HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

The area of the St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Historic District was mostly undeveloped land prior to 1870. Although platted by Thomas Poppleton's 1821 survey, no streets were laid out or houses built until after the Civil War. Poppleton's map (Map 1) showed the State Penitentiary and the houses of Dr. Stevenson and a Mr. Rutter oriented toward York Avenue (later Greenmount Avenue), the major turnpike to York, Pennsylvania. Rutter's house stood in the middle of Constitution Street (later Brentwood Avenue) and the present lot lines follow the general outline of the nursery appearing on the 1896 Bromley Atlas map and still an open space in the present District. The 1851 update of the Poppleton map shows development moving up both sides of Greenmount, (Map 2)

(continue)



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-3963

Baltimore City Directories  
Baltimore City Landmark file on St. Frances Academy, CHAP  
Baltimore Museum of Industry  
Baltimore Sun, various issues, 1880's to 1983

(continue on next page)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 13.48Quadrangle name Baltimore EastQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached maps and Section 7, Continuation page 4.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet L. Davis, Historical Preservation Analyst, assisted by:  
Mary K. Mannix, Kenneth M. Short and William S. Steelman

organization Comm. for Hist. & Arch. Pres. (CHAP) date June 1987street & number Rm. 606 Tower Suites, 118 N. Howard St. telephone (301) 396-4866city or town Baltimore state Maryland 21201

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

## 7. Description

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Avenue Historic District is an area of approximately six square blocks in east central Baltimore. It is generally bounded by Greenmount Avenue on the east, East Chase Street on the south, the Jones Falls valley on the west, and the Amtrak approach to the Union Tunnel on the north. The District boundaries are irregular, responding to new construction, non-historic open space, and areas with less integrity. It is roughly linear in shape, running north and south. The topography is generally level, with a slight incline from south to north. The scale is mostly low, with two and three story rowhouses linking three large key structures and complexes. The St. Frances Academy (B-981) at the corner of East Chase Street and Brentwood Avenue consists of a four story school and convent and a chapel. The Industrial Building (B-1024) is a seven story industrial loft building now used as a residential structure at 501 East Preston Street at Brentwood Avenue. The Detrick and Harvey Machine Works (B-3964) at 508 East Preston, opposite the Industrial Building, is a group of three connecting principal structures varying from one to three stories which are used as a cab dispatch headquarters and a car repair shop. The District is almost completely developed, the open spaces within its boundaries being primarily the result of demolition and grouped on East Chase and Forrest Streets near the Academy.

The District contains approximately 181 structures, primarily residential in use, but also including the religious and institutional buildings of the Academy complex and the originally industrial buildings of the northern section of the area. Also included are a row of commercial buildings in the 1200 and 1300 blocks of Greenmount Avenue and a corner commercial group at Greenmount and East Biddle Street (See Photos 21, 22, 23). This group takes in an open space (Photo 21), historically a nursery, which remains partially cultivated with small private gardens. A corner store is located at Biddle and Brentwood. The architectural periods and styles reflect the eclecticism of the late 19th century and the early modern commercial style of the 20th century. The basic two or three story rowhouse is varied by applied or structural ornamentation derived from the Renaissance Revival and Queen Anne styles and the Arts and Crafts movement (Photos 1, 3, 5). The Industrial Building (Photo 20) is straightforward in its modern functionalism, as is the group of buildings of the Machine Works (B-3964; Photo 1) begun in the 1880's. The St. Frances Academy is basically Second Empire in its original building and Renaissance Revival in its 1907 chapel (B-981; Photos 1 and 2). The universal building material is brick, with terra cotta, wood, and stone details and trim. The exception is the Industrial Building which has a concrete exterior. A few individual facades and some rear and side elevations are stucco. The scale of the District is low with the major exception of the seven story Industrial Building which is visible from several blocks away in every direction. The design and workmanship of the buildings directly represent the period of the area. The simple design of the

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residences resulted from the mass construction in response to housing need in the 1870's and 1880's, but relatively cheap labor costs provided the craftsmanship for fine brickwork and carpentry.

As in the neighboring Johnston Square Historic District, the decoration is centered primarily on the cornices, belt courses, and window and door surrounds (Photo 5). The cornices are usually bracketed, some with pendants and fascia panels below the main elements (Photos 3 and 4). Some feature combinations of bead and dentil (Photo 6) and cross-shaped perforations in the wood friezes (Photo 14). The window and door surrounds include alternating vermiculated voussoir bricks (Photo 19) in one case, although most are plain brick. Belt courses are also in a variety of designs. In the case of the Academy, a prominent architect, George Frederick, produced the simple but imposing Academy building (B-981; Photo 1) and an unidentified architect almost certainly designed the chapel (B-981; Photo 2). The Industrial Building was the heralded result of the collaboration of the architect Theodore W. Pietsch and an engineer, P. O. Kielholtz (Photo 20).

The buildings are typical of rowhouse neighborhoods in their closely packed rows of facades (Photos 1,3,5,6,8 and 10), broken only by small alleys and an occasional demolition site. The facades are close to the street with no setbacks or lawns except at the Academy, where the school is set back and enclosed by a small garden and a high brick wall on Chase Street. A chain link fence separates the school property from the closed right of way of Forrest Street between Chase and the southern District boundary. The street plan is generally a grid, but street lines are not continuous, disgressing on Brentwood Avenue toward the west between Chase and Biddle, and running diagonally on Forrest Street. Brentwood Avenue in the 1200 block is brick surfaced, while all other streets are asphalt. The nursery lot and a few other lots on Greenmount respond to the original line of the old turnpike route to York. Forrest Street parallels this section of Greenmount in the 1100 block.

The District achieved its significance as a cohesive neighborhood of residential and industrial structures in the period from 1870, the date of the Academy's first building, to 1914, the date of the addition to the 1912 Industrial Building. Early in this period, the Academy and a few buildings lining East Eager Street and the northern edge of the State Penitentiary property, just south of the District, were the only large structures in the area of the future historic district. Sachse's Bird's Eye View of Baltimore of 1869 (Attachment 1) shows open land between the Eager Street buildings northward to the enclosed area around the Rutter House, identified on the 1821 and 1851 Poppleton maps, which later became the nursery lot. North of this was a row of commercial buildings along Greenmount Avenue. To the west along the Jones Falls were a florist's nursery and the Pearl Hominy Company on the west bank of the Falls. The Academy remained a lone structure until the late 1870's when the demand for housing for immigrant German and Irish near the St. James and St. John's parishes to the east in the Johnston Square area stimulated residential construction all through the district between the Jones Falls and Harford Avenue. The unpredictability and

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noisome smell of the Falls was overcome by paving over the course in the early 20th century, but, until that time, the immediate vicinity of the stream was still primarily industrial in use. The Detrick and Harvey Machine Works was established on Preston Street about 1885. By 1896, the Bromley Atlas (See Map #3), showed the southern part of the District fully developed and the future site of the Industrial Building occupied by the Central Railway Power House and Depot. Brentwood Avenue, then Constitution Street, was unbuilt on its west side and open land lay between the Power House, the Machine Works, and the Falls. The 1914 Topographical Survey Commission map (See Map #4), shows the Industrial Building completed and the west side of the newly-named Brentwood Avenue built up. The Falls had been covered, but development had not yet taken place over it.

The buildings of the District remain primarily residential, combined residential/commercial in the case of the corner stores and some of the Greenmount Avenue buildings, educational, and industrial. The major change in use has been the Industrial Building's conversion to elderly housing in the early 1980's. The Machine Works use changed only from heavy industrial to light industrial with its acquisition by the Yellow Cab Company in the late 1920's. Each type remains clearly the same in external appearance, although the Industrial Building's original multiple light industrial sash was replaced by smaller plate glass and dark metallic infill panels.

The condition of the buildings ranges from good to deteriorated. The Industrial Building is in the best overall condition, having been newly rehabilitated. The Machine Works is likewise sound and in use throughout most of its enclosed space. Alterations to the street facades on Preston have closed or reduced in size several window and door openings with brick or glass block. A driveway was put through the original buildings from east to west in the 1920's, but few other major changes have altered the exterior appearance. The St. Frances Academy has been well maintained in recent years in spite of financial troubles. Much of the renovation in the complex has necessarily been concentrated on the school and the convent. The chapel has broken stained glass windows and a general appearance of neglect, but is still a viable and important part of the group. The individual residences in the District vary from boarded and deteriorating (Photo 13) to recently rehabilitated (Photo 5). Most of the houses are leased rather than owned by the occupants and maintenance also varies from non-existent to good.

The District is made distinct from the surrounding area primarily by the presence of open space or lots caused by demolition and by new or intrusive construction. At the north end of the District, the Machine Works is separated by a parking lot from the Waverly Press, a mid-20th century building. The houses on Brentwood Avenue and Biddle Street have rear lot lines adjoining an intrusive 1930's postal facility building which has no historical or architectural relationship to the District. Along Greenmount Avenue, the historical link to the old turnpike route is no longer close, there being several areas of open



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space caused by demolition. One such area is a parking lot immediately east of the Industrial Building. The 1100 block of Greenmount also is decimated by demolition. The former 1000 block of Forrest Street was demolished in the 1970's and the street closed, cutting off St. Frances from the Greenmount Avenue corridor. The block and a half west of Brentwood Avenue between Chase and Biddle Streets has been breached by demolitions, creating unnatural gaps in the streetscapes. By contrast, the more complete rows on the east side of Brentwood and on Forrest Street are clearly more characteristic of the historical appearance of the area.

The District contains 181 buildings, all of which are contributing structures, a percentage of approximately 98 per cent. There are also 4 non-contributing sites, all of the result of demolitions. One historic open space, the nursery lot in the 1100 block of Greenmount, is included in the District boundary. Following is a list of the major buildings in the District:

Key Structures:

- B-981 St. Frances Academy, 501 East Chase Street: a group of connecting religious and educational buildings consisting of an 1870 Second Empire mansard-roofed school and convent, and a 1907 Renaissance Revival chapel. The group is a Baltimore City Landmark, designated in 1982.
- B-1024 Industrial Building, 501 East Preston Street: a seven-story steel framed concrete industrial structure built in 1912 with an addition in 1914. Commercial style with flat roof and painted smooth concrete exterior and "E"-shaped plan. Listed in National Register in 1980. Now used as elderly housing after 1982 rehabilitation.
- B-3964 Detrick and Harvey Machine Works (Yellow Cab Co. and Lee's Body Shop), 508 East Preston Street: an 1885 through ca. 1910 group of three brick industrial buildings with reinforced walls and gable roofs. Converted to a cab dispatch headquarters in the 1920's, it was altered with a drive-through opening in the eastern part of the 1885 buildings.

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Avenue Historic District boundary is based on changes in density resulting from demolitions and changes in architectural style and historical use. The northeastern corner of the District in the 1300 block of Greenmount Avenue includes a row of late 19th century commercial buildings in various states of alteration (Photo 23). Across the former turnpike route to Greenmount is a row of recently rehabilitated residential houses which are included in the Johnston Square Historic District. The boundary continues south on Greenmount until the non-historic open space which is now a parking lot in the 1200 block (Photo 22). Excluding this lot, the boundary returns to Greenmount where a small group of commercial buildings at the corner of Biddle and the historic open space of the nursery lot are included (Photo 21). The boundary then leaves Greenmount because of several open spaces left by demolition and a large modern warehouse in the 1000 block. The St. Frances Academy property forms the southern



## 7. Description continued

anchor of the District, leaving out open areas caused by demolition. Brentwood Avenue and its continuous rows are distinct from the lots which face East Eager Street and the Penitentiary by their integrity and continuity of style (Photo 16). Parking lots for the prison complex behind the west side houses of Brentwood Avenue and the south side row on Chase provide an obvious boundary. Open spaces from demolition and lapses in integrity on the west side of the 1100 block of Brentwood preclude this area from the District. The intrusive former postal facility which was erected over the covered Jones Falls is another clearly defined boundary on the west side of the District. The parking lot on the north side of Preston borders the edge of the historic lot line containing the Machine Works.

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but primarily on the west side. A few scattered small structures are all that occupy the area between Greenmount and the Jones Falls.

Possibly as a result of the nearness of the prison and the unpredictable Jones Falls, the future District did not attract development during the mid 19th century expansions. Like the Johnston Square District (B-3957), the influx of German and Irish immigrants stimulated construction of small middle class houses in the vicinity of the principal Catholic churches in northeast central Baltimore, St. John the Evangelist at Eager and Valley and St. James the Less at Eager and Aisquith. Prior to this development, however, another Catholic institution established itself in the open land north of the prison. In 1870, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the first black order of nuns in the nation, established in 1828, built a school and convent facing north at the corner of Chase and Constitution Street. Designed by George Frederick, the architect of City Hall, St. James the Less, and the original Druid Hill Park structures, the school was a modestly dignified mansard roofed building which suggested the intent of the order, the education and upbringing of poor and orphaned black girls, and the hope that this high ideal would set a more refined tone for its surroundings than that of the prison. The school, founded simultaneously with the order, was the first school for black children in Maryland.

The 1869 Sachse's Bird Eye View of Baltimore (Attachment 1) shows how development north from Jonestown (Oldtown) had reached Eager Street and both sides of Greenmount Avenue. After St. Frances Academy was built, it remained fairly isolated, perhaps adding the stigma of racial segregation to the already existing problems of the Falls and the prison. Housing need and industrial opportunity overcame these problems eventually, although perhaps at a slower rate than in the Johnston Square District. By 1896, the Bromley Atlas (Map 3) showed the southern part of the District fully developed. In the north, the Detrick and Harvey Machine Works had been established about 1885 on Preston Street, a strategic location near a water source and the Baltimore and Ohio tracks leading to the Union Tunnel as well as on a street railway line. Detrick and Harvey manufactured heavy machine tools and equipment and were active into the 1920's from the Preston Street works. The Baltimore Museum of Industry has on display an open-sided planer made by Detrick and Harvey. The Central Railway built a stable and depot across Preston Street to the south in about 1883. This was converted to an electric power house for the line in 1893. Development of rowhouses, however, remained south and east of the Machine Works and the Power House.

In 1912, the Power House was replaced by Industrial Building, a steel reinforced concrete loft building financed by a group of prominent local businessmen who sold stock to the public as an investment to support the industrial development of Baltimore. Theodore W. Pietsch, an architect with considerable experience in commercial and industrial buildings

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(the Sonneborn Building, the Bowen and King Building among others), collaborated with an engineer, P.O. Kielholtz, on the design. A straightforward Commercial style exterior concealed the true significance of the structure, the open flexible floor space served by elevators which could be divided for several tenants as needed. This contrasted with the specialized Detrick and Harvey Machine Works across Preston which added buildings and openings at the rear of its lot as the business grew and fluctuated over several decades. The Industrial Building was placed on the National Register in 1980.

In 1913, the Jones Falls was covered over, containing once and for all the wandering flood plain. Housing extended closer to the street and by the 1930's, a postal facility building was erected over the covered course. This defined the edge of the Falls valley, but it also provided a break in the rows of housing which became part of the District's boundary. The 1914 addition of a wing to the Industrial Building ended the significant period of development of the area, coinciding with the end of Johnston Square's growth. The boundary between the two districts during this period was indistinguishable, with no differentiation in architectural style and type, although the St. Frances-Brentwood District had the two largest industrial sites. In the second and third quarters of the 20th century, a general economic decline in the nation as a whole resulted in the gradual deterioration and neglect of the inner city. In the St. Frances-Brentwood District, the housing shifted to primarily black occupancy as the original Irish and German residents moved further out of the city. Home ownership declined and upkeep became haphazard. The St. Frances Academy struggled through difficult financial times, the last addition of importance being the 1907 chapel. The Industrial Building had various tenants over time, but managed to stay at least partially occupied until the mid 1970's. The Detrick and Harvey works were acquired by Bethlehem Steel in the early 1920's, but had to shut down a few years later. In 1927, the Yellow Cab Company bought the property for its headquarters and dispatch office, eventually leasing space to an auto repair shop.

Preservation and restoration activities in the District have been mostly confined to the three key structures. St. Frances Academy was renovated in 1978-79 with private and public funding. The chapel is currently in need of repair, especially its stained glass windows. The Industrial Building's conversion in 1982 to Section 8 elderly housing was the most significant rehabilitation project so far in the District because of its size and visibility. This conversion retained the streamlined exterior, but replaced the distinctive industrial sash with metallic infill panels and residential size sash, altering considerably the appearance of the building. The Detrick and Harvey Works principal Preston Street buildings have been sandblasted and repointed and many of its doors and windows reduced in size and filled with glass block or brick. The distinctive brick reinforcing buttresses remain exposed, clearly suggesting its original purpose. The 600 block of East Biddle Street (Photo 5) contains some rehabilitated houses, which exhibit mixed

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results. Stone veneers and infill windows are common here as throughout the District and some details have been lost such as the dentils of the door surrounds. Repointing is often heavy handed. Formstone is also common, as seen in the 1000 block of Brentwood (Photo 9).

The District's architectural significance is clearly expressed in its design, materials, and workmanship, being originally a part of the larger Johnston Square area in which the same unity is apparent. The setting of these qualities in the continuous rows of houses on Biddle, Brentwood, and Forrest Streets conveys the image of a late 19th century middle class neighborhood in which the District developed its significance. The apparent abrupt juxtaposition of the industrial buildings is, in fact, typical of two other Baltimore neighborhoods, Canton and Poppleton, where factories and railroad yards are located adjacent to rowhouses. The continuing use and exterior preservation of the District's large industrial structures retains the original non-residential element of the area. Except for the change in window and door openings, both the Machine Works and the Industrial Building retain the functional structure expressed on their exterior walls as buttresses and piers which are associated with heavy machine technology.

The St. Frances Academy-Brentwood District was one of several areas which developed northward from the original center of Baltimore in Jonestown (Oldtown). As new areas were annexed, the Poppleton street plan was extended into them for future development. The St. Frances-Brentwood area was slower to be built up for the natural and social reasons discussed earlier. These early retardants, however, gave rise to the distinctive elements of the District, the mother house and school of the first order of black nuns in the country, and the two important industrial structures. These sites and the rowhouses around them completed the development of the area defined by the turnpike route, the railroad tracks to the north, and the Jones Falls to the west.

There are no major intrusions within the boundaries of the District, although the western boundary is defined by an intrusive structure, the 1930's postal service building. This one-story building has a stripped down quasi-Classical Revival facade on Preston Street, but its plan follows the covered Jones Falls, cutting off an isolated row of houses on the south side of Preston. Its scale and style have no relationship to the industrial, institutional, or residential buildings within the District. The open spaces left by demolitions on Forrest Street and Chase Street are obvious gaps, but the largest has been made into a playground. The District boundaries reflect the presence of these gaps and intrusions as well as the largest concentration of structures retaining a similar standard of integrity. The formerly close association with the turnpike and the Johnston Square District to the east has been almost severed by demolitions. Only the commercial row in the 1200-1300 blocks and the nursery lot in the 1100 block retain this link. The other boundaries were primarily chosen to exclude the demolition sites and those groups of houses with less integrity or isolated by non-historic open space.

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

The Canton House Historic District and Poppleton area, mentioned previously, are two areas which are similar to the St. Frances-Brentwood District in several ways. The integration of industrial and transportation complexes adjacent to residential rowhouses is the principal commonality. The St. Frances-Brentwood District is smaller than Canton or Poppleton, but nevertheless contains distinctive industrial sites and architecturally significant rows of houses. All of these areas developed in the late 19th century and were primarily inhabited by ethnic working classes; Canton was the most organized of the three, being a company town for many years before annexation by the city. Canton is a National Register District and Poppleton has been determined eligible. The St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Avenue Historic District deserves similar recognition.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Dorsey, John, and James D. Dilts, A Guide to Baltimore Architecture,  
Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1981  
Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Department: Vertical files on key  
structures  
National Register form on Industrial Building, CHAP

## List of Photographs and Slides

E. Biddle St.

- |    |          |             |
|----|----------|-------------|
| 1. | 320-428  | South elev. |
| 2. | 430-436  | South elev. |
| 3. | 400 Blk. | North elev. |
| 4. | 407      | Cornice     |
| 5. | 600 Blk. | South elev. |
| 6. | 601-611  | North elev. |
| 7. | 613-621  | North elev. |

N. Brentwood Ave.

- |     |           |            |
|-----|-----------|------------|
| 8.  | 1000 Blk. | East elev. |
| 9.  | 1000 Blk. | West elev. |
| 10. | 1100 Blk. | West elev. |
| 11. | 1200 Blk. | East elev. |

E. Chase St.

- |     |          |             |
|-----|----------|-------------|
| 12. | 400 Blk. | North elev. |
| 13. | 500 Blk. | South elev. |
| 14. | 506      | Cornice     |
| 15. | 600 Blk. | South elev. |

E. Eager St.

16. State Pen. Boundary

N. Forrest St.

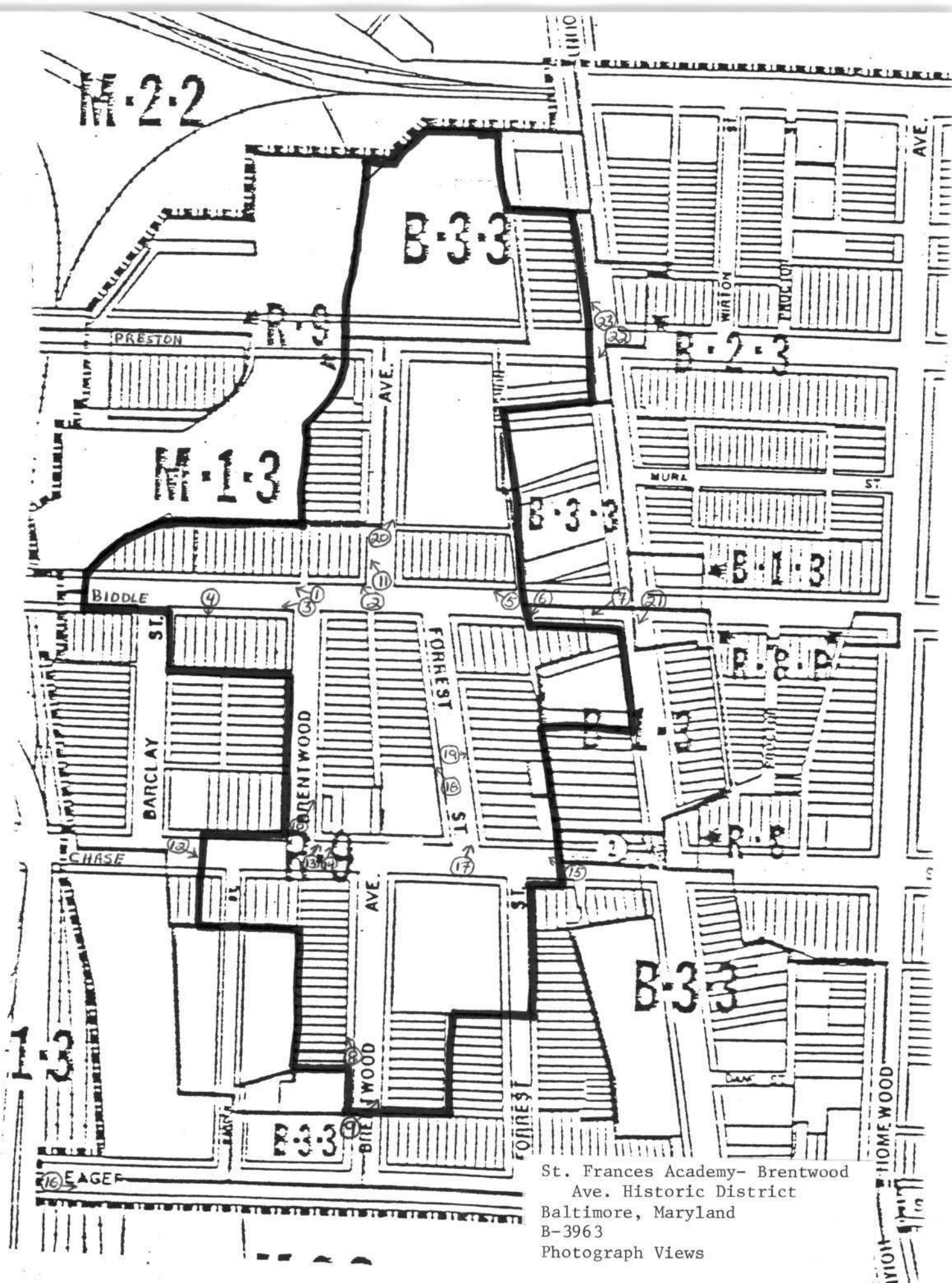
- |     |           |            |
|-----|-----------|------------|
| 17. | 1100 Blk. | West elev. |
| 18. | 1100 Blk. | East elev. |
| 19. | 1115      | Window     |

E. Preston St.

20. 501-Industrial bldg West elev.

N. Greenmount Ave.

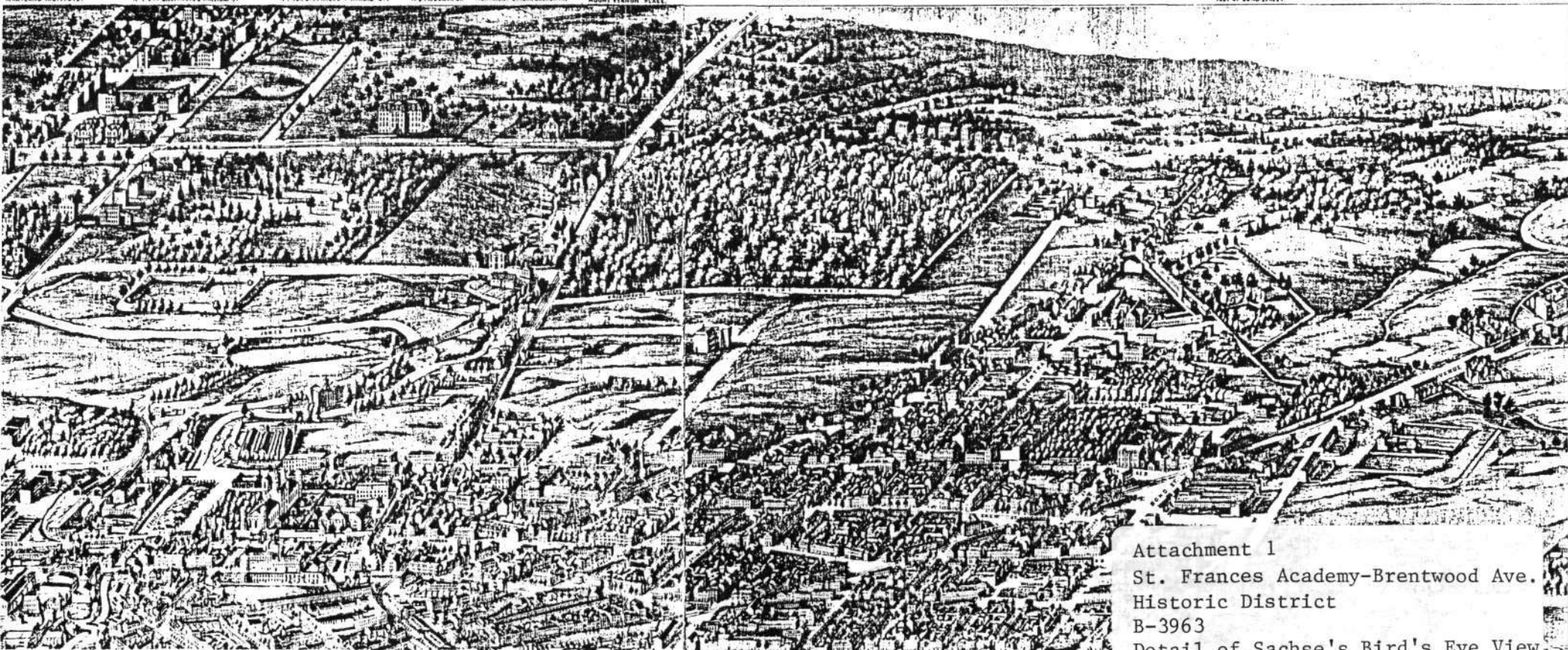
- |     |           |            |
|-----|-----------|------------|
| 21. | 1100 Blk. | East elev. |
| 22. | 1224-1228 | East elev. |
| 23. | 1300 Blk. | East elev. |



St. Frances Academy- Brentwood  
Ave. Historic District  
Baltimore, Maryland  
B-3963  
Photograph Views







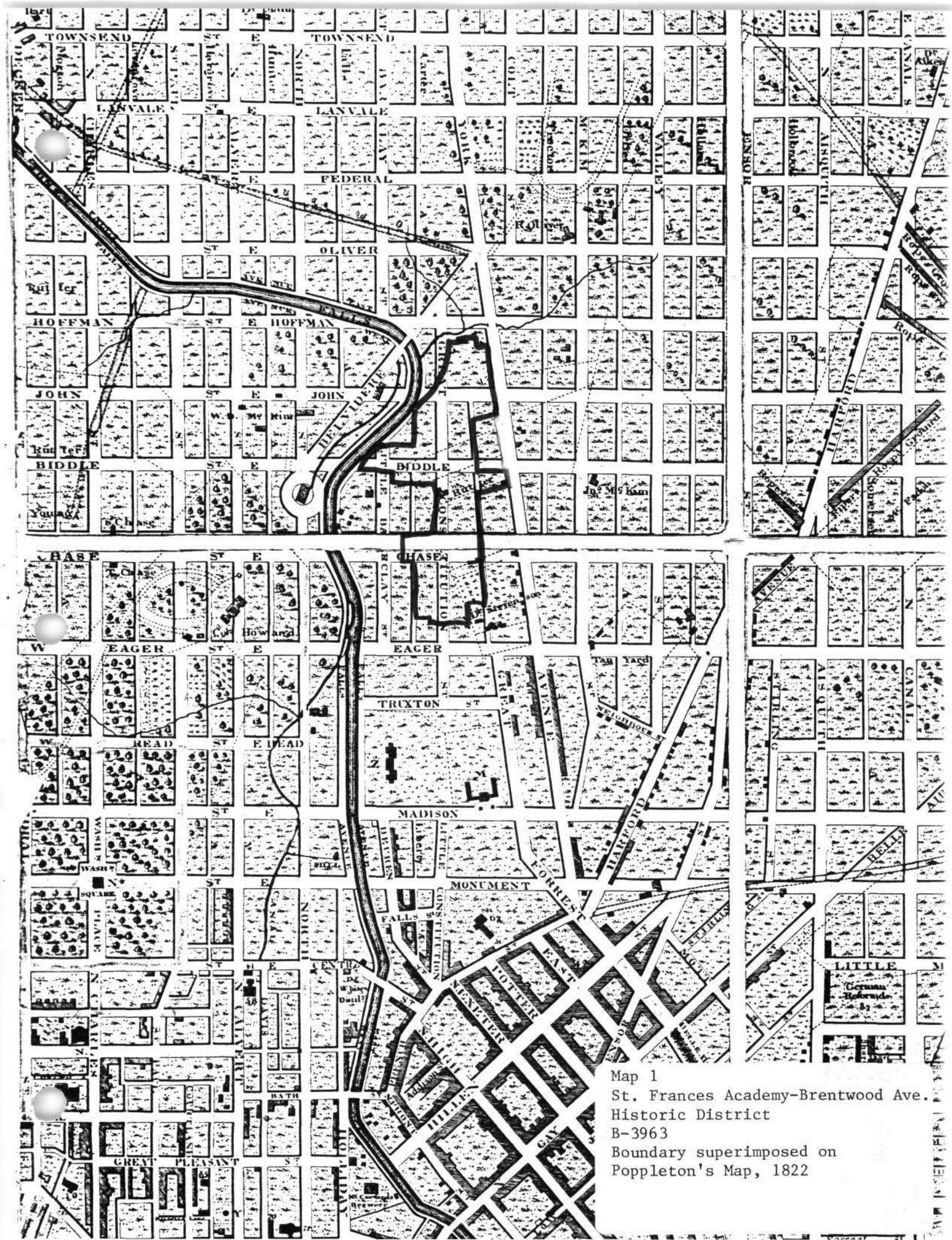
Attachment 1  
 St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave.  
 Historic District  
 B-3963  
 Detail of Sachse's Bird's Eye View  
 of Baltimore, 1869  
 Future district 1½ inches left of  
 center





St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Avenue H.D.  
Baltimore, Maryland  
B-3963

- Key structures
- Contributing structures
- Contributing open space
- Non-contributing structures
- Non-contributing open space



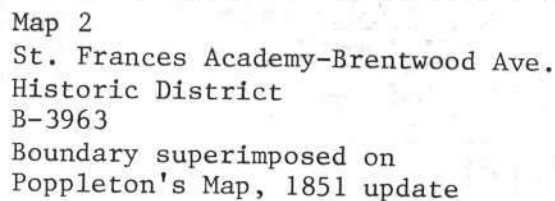
Map 1  
St. Francis Academy-Brentwood Ave.  
Historic District  
B-3963  
Boundary superimposed on  
Poppleton's Map, 1822



Secretary, J. J. Graves Secretary.

Antarctica by Trustees of Poor House

2. D. 1818. Cast  
R. C. Long Arch

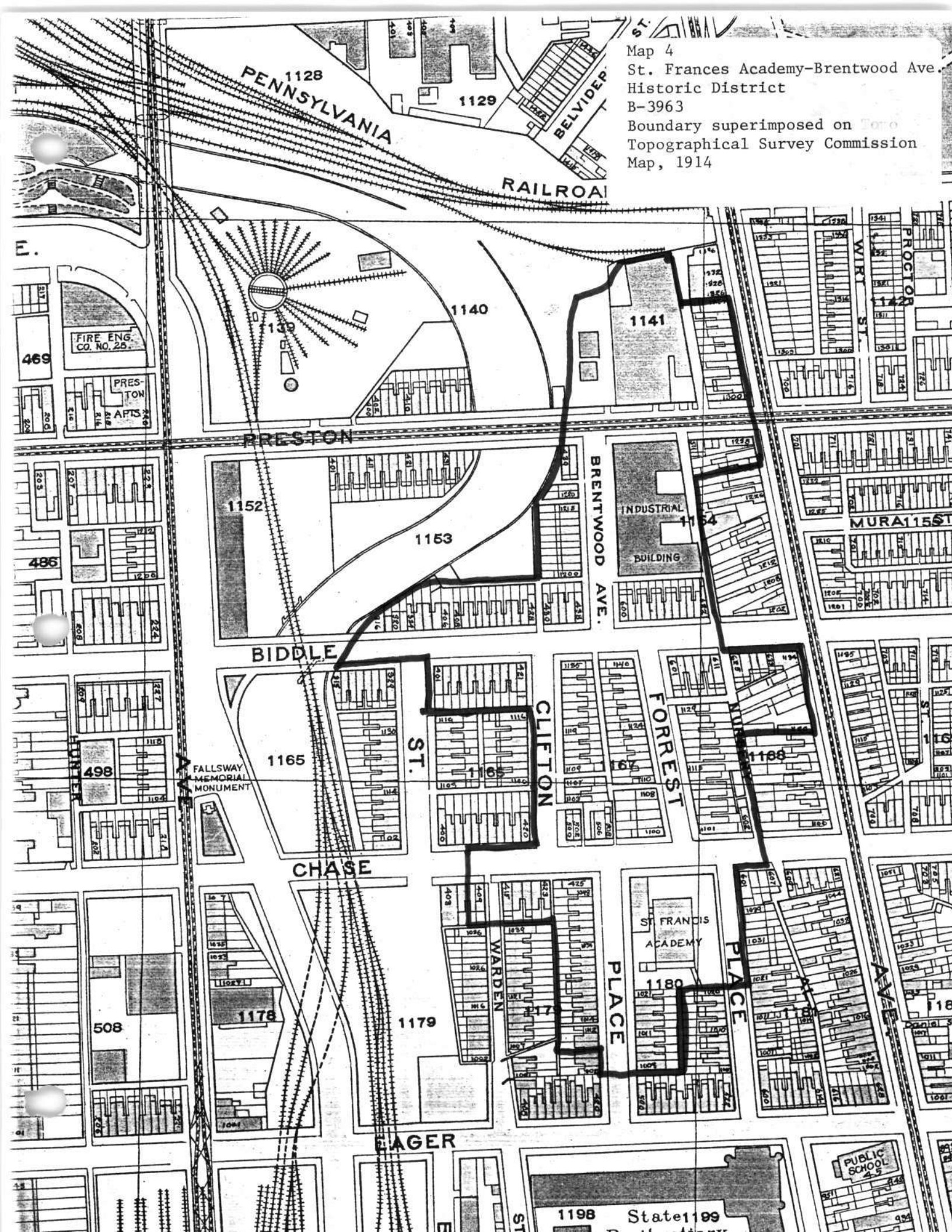






Map 3  
St. Francis Academy-Brentwood Ave.  
Historic District  
B-3963  
Boundary superimposed on Bromley's  
Atlas of Baltimore City, 1896

Boundary superimposed on ~~Toro~~  
Topographical Survey Commission  
Map, 1914







St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

320-428 E. Biddle St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

South elevation

1/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963  
Historic District  
430-436 E. Biddle St.  
Baltimore (City), Maryland  
Photo: Kenneth M. Short  
Date: March 1987  
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust  
South elevation  
2/23





St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

400 Blk. E. Biddle St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

North elevation

3/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-39 63

Historic District

407 E. Biddle St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: April 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

North elevation-cornice





St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-39 63

Historic District

600 Blk. E. Biddle St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

South elevation

5/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave.      B-3963  
Historic District  
601-611 E. Biddle St.  
Baltimore (City), Maryland  
Photo: Kenneth M. Short  
Date: March 1987  
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust  
North elevation  
6/23





St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

613-621 E. Biddle St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

North elevation



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave.      B-3963  
Historic District  
1000 Blk. N. Brentwood Ave.  
Baltimore (City), Maryland  
Photo: Kenneth M. Short  
Date: March 1987  
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust  
East elevation  
8/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

1000 Blk. N. Brentwood Ave.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

West elevation

9/23





St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

1100 Blk. N. Brentwood Ave.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

West elevation

10/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-39 63

Historic District

1200 Blk. N. Brentwood Ave.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

East elevation

11/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave.      B-39 63

Historic District

400 Blk. E. Chase St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

North elevation

12/23





St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave.      B-3963  
Historic District  
500 Blk. E. Chase St.  
Baltimore (City), Maryland  
Photo: Kenneth M. Short  
Date: March 1987  
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust  
South elevation  
13/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave.

B-3963

Historic District

506 E. Chase St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: April 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

South elevation-cornice

14/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

600 Blk. E. Chase St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

South elevation

15/23





St. Francis Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

E. Eager St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

View looking east-State Pen. boundary



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

1100 Blk. N. Forrest St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

West elevation

17/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-39 63

Historic District

1100 Blk. N. Forrest St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

East elevation

18/23





St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

1115 N. Forrest St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: April 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

West elevation-window arch

19/23



St. Frances Academy - Brentwood Ave.

B-3963

Historic District

The Industrial Building

501 E. Preston St.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

West elevation

20/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

1100 Blk. Greenmount Ave.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

East elevation

21/23





St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave. B-3963

Historic District

1224-1228 N. Greenmount Ave.

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

East elevation

22/23



St. Frances Academy-Brentwood Ave.      B-3963

*Historic District*

1300 Blk. N. Greenmount Ave.

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 1987

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

East elevation

23/23